

It has been suggested by advocates of the structure that this General Assembly authorize its construction and financing, the same, however, to be contingent upon the favorable result of the investigations still necessary to be made.

We do not believe this can be done. The State is not a private or quasi-public corporation, but is subject to administrative limitations which are imposed upon it in the public interest.

The undertaking furthermore means or at least may mean too much to the taxpayers and the people of the State for the General Assembly to delegate the decision, before the facts are known, to any official or officials of the State.

If all other questions are resolved in favor of the bridge, then the method of financing it will still remain. It is entirely possible that the best method will be by pledging the tolls to secure the bonds, but this would be an innovation in State financing in Maryland, and while accepted elsewhere it does involve questions and may involve consequences which ought to receive the most thorough consideration. It is also possible that the best method of financing will be through State bonds secured by direct taxes. If so, this would increase the net State debt by at least one-third of its present amount, but tolls could be availed of as an offset to the carrying charges.

In either case the people and the taxpayers of the State are entitled to full opportunity to consider every phase of the matter, and the effect it would or might have upon their interests, and they are entitled to pass upon it themselves through their representatives in the General Assembly, after the facts have all been presented for their consideration, and not have this General Assembly, which does not and cannot know the facts, pass the decision on to the executive officials of the State Government.

The stockholders of no private corporation would proceed in any such way. They would want the right to consider and decide a question of this kind themselves, with all the facts known and before them. The same right should be given the people and the taxpayers of the State.

Your committee recommends, therefore, that the State Roads Commission proceed with its investigations as promptly and expeditiously as possible, and that as soon as completed the same be submitted to the Governor of the State, who shall make them public forthwith, and take such further action thereon as he may deem best for the interests of the State.